

Guard Rail Provision Requirements under UK Building Regulations 2010

Responsibility for all building work compliance to the Building Regulations 2010 lies with those in control of the work in question, however it lies principally with the building owner to ensure that all contractors comply with their requirements of their relevant trades, and that all works are certified by a registered competent person, as it is this building owner that can be served with an enforcement notice.

It is noted within the regulations that “Building Work” consists of all areas of construction and maintenance provision. This includes erection of buildings, extensions, material alterations and controlled service provision or extension. In general, this is applicable for new and existing buildings.

The UK Building Regulations 2010, Part K considers many aspects of fall protection and access that should be taken into account with respect to solution provision within the health and safety community, as support to compliance to the Working at Height Regulations.

With respect to Guard Rail provision it is specifically Section K2: Protection from Falling that we need to investigate further.

Under section K2 the requirements are as follows:

Requirements	
<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Limits on application</i>
Protection from falling	
K2. —(a) Any stairs, ramps, floors and balconies and any roof to which people have access, and (b) any light well, basement area or similar sunken area connected to a building, shall be provided with barriers where it is necessary to protect people in or about the building from falling.	Requirement K2 (a) applies only to stairs and ramps which form part of the building.

This requirement to protect personnel during all access obviously covers normal working areas such as stairwells, balconies and atrium areas within the building, but it also lines up with the Working at Height Regulations by requiring roofing areas accessed for maintenance to also be protected in the same manner.

Where the provision transfers from regular pedestrian traffic to maintenance protection then a risk assessment is then required to ascertain the levels of safety required, and may be a different solution than that for the public areas.

For example, public areas may be provided with a glass or stainless steel balustrade, which will need to comply with BS 6399:1997, and BS 6180:2011.

In comparison an industrial style guard rail may be the solution for a maintenance or access area which is not for general access. This is a lower risk area due to the lower traffic levels, and this guarding solution should comply to EN 13374:2013 and / or EN 14122-3:2016.

These risk assessments and subsequent solutions and method statements must always be carried out by a competent person. As we can see, in addition to passing the required testing standard and being required under the Working at Height Regulations:2005, are also a requirement under the Building Regulations 2010.

Guidance is given to Section K of the Building regulations in the HM Government Approved Document K. A link to a download for this is shown below.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/443181/BR_PDF_AD_K_2013.pdf

In Issue 2 we shall be talking about the requirements under section K1, looking at stairs, steps, guarding requirements and roofing steps.

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